



PUBLIC HEALTH BYTES

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Henrico Health Department's Newsletter

Working in partnership
with the citizens of
Henrico County to create
the conditions for health.

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Hot Topics

Unsafe Injection Practices!!! Henrico Health Department is reminding health care providers to review office protocols and procedures to ensure proper safety and infection control practices are in place. This comes in the wake of recent incidents in New York and Nevada in which patients were infected with hepatitis C, allegedly through the reuse of needles and syringes. In Nevada, the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) has identified six cases of hepatitis C – five of the cases had procedures requiring injected anesthesia on the same day. SNHD has concluded that the exposures were from the anesthesia procedure, not from the GI procedures. See: www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/outbreaks.

Communicable Diseases

Henrico Roundup: Henrico Health District has been made aware of two *B. pertussis* cases (one confirmed, one currently suspect) in our region. As you know, pertussis is highly contagious and can occur among persons at any age regardless of vaccination status. We are alerting local practices of the presence of pertussis in the community. Consider pertussis when evaluating patients with an acute cough illness characterized by prolonged cough or cough with paroxysms, whoop, or post-tussive gagging/vomiting. Adults and very young infants may have atypical presentations. Please consider reviewing the immunization records for your patients to ensure they are up to date on their pertussis vaccinations. For information on pertussis testing and the sensitivities and specificities of different tests, see the "Pertussis Resources" at: http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/health_provider.html

Environmental Health

Reporting toxic substance related illnesses: Periodically we are made aware of illness resulting from toxic substances. Providers should recall that suspected or confirmed toxic substance-related illnesses are reportable under Virginia statute. Environmental health investigations are often complex and require significant interagency coordination. Early reporting is beneficial to both identify the scope of the concern and prevent future illness and pollution. **Zoonotic Disease Newsletter:** A new quarterly newsletter will discuss zoonotic diseases and their impact on wildlife, domestic animals and public health in Virginia. See: http://www.vdh.state.va.us/epidemiology/DEE/zoonosesdata/documents/zoonewletterfinal3_26.pdf

Community Health Improvement

Help us save the next baby! Our data analysis indicates that infant mortality prevention in Henrico will require improved preconception health and healthcare. See: <http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/preconception.asp>

Pandemic Flu - ALERT PHASE WHO: 3; US: 0

Pandemic/Avian Flu Update: Human Cases– In the last month, new human H5N1 infections were reported by Egypt (4 cases) and Vietnam (1 case). The newest H5N1 cases occurred in males aged 8 to 11 years and females aged 4 to 25 years. Of the 373 cases reported by fourteen countries from 2003 to 3/18/08, 236 have been fatal (63.3%).

Seasonal Flu Corner

Virginia 2007-08 Influenza Surveillance Activity Level for Week 12 (as of 3/22/08): Virginia is reporting "widespread" influenza activity. See Virginia's flu data at: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/Epidemiology/Surveillance/Influenza/index.htm>

School Health - CORRECTION

A message from VDH: "This is to inform you that the second dose of mumps and varicella vaccine **will not** be required for school entry in the upcoming 2008/09 school year. This is a change from information we provided earlier. These doses are on the Recommended Immunization Schedule and should be administered to children you serve, however, they cannot be required for school attendance until the revised regulations are approved by the Board of Health and the regulatory process is completed. This will not occur in time for enrollment in the 2008/09 school year." See: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/Epidemiology/Immunization/requirements.htm>.

Emergency Preparedness

Medical Reserve Corps Grows East! Help us spread the word about the first monthly one-hour lunch training provided free at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, April 15, at the Sandston Library, 23 Williamsburg Road, near the Airport. See <http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/mrc.html> for info.

Prevention Update

USPSTF Updates: Given 1) the recent CDC report citing that 1 in 4 female teens has at least one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STI's) - <http://www.cdc.gov/stdconference/2008/media/summaries-11march2008.htm#tues1> - and 2) local syphilis increases, you may find it helpful to review the USPSTF recommendation on STI screening that were recently compiled at: <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstf08/methods/stinfections.htm>

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